

University of North Alabama
Key Findings from the Student Campus Climate Survey
Full Report - 2015

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Introduction

National statistics indicate that one in five women will be sexually assaulted during their college years (White House Task Force Report, 2014), and that college men also face a significant risk of being sexually victimized (Banyard, Ward, Cohn, Moorhead & Walsh, 2007; Isley, 1998). Amidst growing concern, President Obama convened the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault to establish guidelines to assist colleges and universities in developing effective sexual assault prevention and intervention programming. In April 2014, the Task Force released its first report which recommends a four step process for all colleges and universities: (1) identify the problem by conducting campus climate surveys; (2) prevent sexual assault – and pay special attention to engaging men in this process; (3) effectively respond when a student is sexually assaulted; and (4) increase transparency and improve enforcement.

In accordance with the Task Force’s recommendations, in fall 2014 the University of North Alabama (UNA) administered a Student Campus Climate Survey.¹ The purpose of the survey was to provide UNA with critical information regarding our campus climate, campus resources, and experiences of our students. All students at UNA were sent a notification about the online survey, and a total of 978 surveys were completed. This report presents key findings from the survey along with recommendations for developing effective prevention and intervention programming for our students.

Funding and Budget

Research indicates increasingly poor response rates for online surveys that do not offer at least the opportunity for incentives in exchange for participation, particularly in the college student population (Porter & Whitcomb, 2003). In order to ensure the broadest possible representation, students were offered the opportunity to receive an incentive for their participation in the survey. At the end of the survey students were presented with the opportunity to enter a drawing for one of the following prizes: 1 \$50 gift card to the UNA Bookstore; 2 \$25 gift cards to Starbucks; and 5 \$10 gift cards for Dining Dollars. The funds for these prizes were provided by UNA’s Division of Student Affairs. The principal investigators provided the labor for the development of the survey, creation of recruitment materials, survey administration, data analyses, and a written report of key findings.

¹ The principal investigators for the Student Campus Climate Survey were UNA faculty members Drs. Amber Paulk, Andrea Hunt, and Yaschica Williams from the Department of Sociology and Family Studies. Once the initial survey was compiled, the UNA Title IX Education and Prevention Advisory Board reviewed the survey. The advisory board includes UNA’s Title IX Coordinator, Ms. Tammy Jacques; UNA faculty, staff, and students; representatives from UNA Student Counseling Services; the UNA Police Department; and Rape Response. The survey was approved by UNA’s Human Subjects Review Committee.

Methods

Survey Instrument

All measures in the survey were taken directly from the White House Task Force Report (2014), which is accessible at the following link: www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/report_0.pdf. The survey contained measures designed to assess the incidence and prevalence of unwanted sexual experiences, intimate partner violence, and stalking/bullying. It also contained measures that assessed participants' perceptions of the general campus; perceptions of campus leadership, policies, and reporting practices as they relate to sexual assault; rape myth acceptance; and bystander attitudes and behaviors.

Due to the sensitive nature of some of the measures, UNA Counseling Services and Rape Response were listed as resources at the beginning of the survey and again at the end. There was also a trigger warning prior to questions regarding sexual assault and intimate partner violence. Participants were reminded that they had the option to skip any questions they would prefer not to answer and/or exit the survey at that time. A copy of UNA's Student Campus Climate Survey is available for review in **Appendix J**.

Procedure

The survey was developed and administered through Qualtrics, which enabled all data collected to be completely anonymous. As an additional measure to maintain anonymity of respondents, the feature in Qualtrics that collects IP address information was disabled.

In September 2014, all students at UNA were sent a notification about the survey via UNA Portal email that contained an electronic link to the online survey. A link to the survey was also posted on UNA's Homepage, Facebook, and Twitter pages. Notifications were also posted at key locations on campus. All individuals who clicked on the survey link were provided with more information about the survey and their rights as a participant. In order to participate, individuals had to provide consent before entering the survey. Individuals under the age of 19 also had to provide a completed parental consent form to participate.

The survey was closed in December 2014. The average response time varied between 10 – 30 minutes with over 65% of respondents completing the survey in 20 minutes or less. In accordance with UNA's Human Subjects Review Committee requirements, only the principal investigators have access to the raw data, which is being stored on their password protected computers.

Sample

A total of 978 surveys were completed. The mean age of participants was 23.1 years old ($SD=7.29$). However, since there was such a wide range of ages reported (16 – 64 years old), the median age of participants (21 years old) may be a more accurate representation of the typical age of participants in our sample. The class standing of participants was as follows: 20.2% freshman, 17.4% sophomore, 26.4% junior, 29.0% senior, 6.6% graduate student, and 0.4% special student. On average, participants reported attending UNA for 4.79 semesters ($SD=3.69$).

Seventy-three percent (73%) of the sample identified as female, 26% identified as male, and approximately 1% identified as transgender or other. In terms of race/ethnicity, 74% of participants identified as Caucasian, 17% identified as African-American, 6.5% identified as bi- or multi-racial, 1.5% identified as American Indian, 0.8% identified as Asian, and 0.2%

identified as Pacific Islander. In a separate question, 3.2% identified as Hispanic/Latino. This racial composition approximates well the racial makeup of the University. More detailed demographic information on the participants in our sample is available for review in **Appendix A**. See **Appendix I** for a breakdown of UNA student demographics that was compiled by the Office of Institutional Research.

Results

I. Unwanted Sexual Experiences

Definition of terms

The survey defined sexual contact as touching of a sexual nature, oral sex, sexual intercourse, anal sex, and sexual penetration with a finger or object. Participants were asked about nonconsensual or unwanted sexual contact they may have experienced since becoming a student at UNA.

The survey defined unwanted sexual experiences as “sexual contact that involved force or threats of force against you. Force could include someone holding you down with his or her body weight, pinning your arms, hitting or kicking you, or using or threatening to use a weapon against you.” Participants were also asked if they had experienced “sexual contact while you were unable to provide consent or stop what was happening because you were passed out, drugged, drunk, incapacitated, or asleep. These situations might include times that you voluntarily consumed alcohol or drugs and times that you were given drugs without your knowledge or consent.”

Incidence of Unwanted Sexual Experiences

Incidence refers to a count of how many unique incidents of unwanted sexual contact occur during a given period of time (i.e., since becoming a student at UNA). A total of **117 incidents** of unwanted sexual contact were reported from a sample of 978 students. According to the National Institute of Justice (2008), incidence rates are calculated by measuring the number of instances reported per 1,000 students. A total of 117 incidences of unwanted sexual contact were reported from a sample of 978 students. If this number is adjusted to reflect a population of 1,000 students, the incidences are adjusted to 119, for an incidence rate of **12%** [Formula: # of incidences per 1,000 / sample population X 100]. More detailed information regarding the incidence of unwanted sexual experiences in our sample is available for review in **Table 1** in **Appendix B**.

Prevalence of Unwanted Sexual Experiences

Prevalence rates are a count of how many unique people have had an unwanted sexual experience during a given period of time (i.e., since becoming a student at UNA). According to the National Institute of Justice (2008), prevalence rates are calculated by dividing the total number of individuals who report an unwanted sexual experience by the sample population and multiplying that number by 100. A total of **68 students** in our sample reported experiencing at least one incident of unwanted sexual contact. Therefore, the prevalence rate of unwanted sexual experiences in our sample was **7%** [Formula: # of individuals reporting / sample population X 100]. More detailed information regarding the prevalence of unwanted sexual experiences in our sample is available for review in **Table 2** in **Appendix B**.

Demographic Information about Individuals Reporting Unwanted Sexual Experiences

Of the 68 unique individuals in our sample who reported an unwanted sexual experience, 81.7% identified as female, 16.7% as male, and 1.6% identified as transgender-female. The breakdown of participants who reported at least one unwanted sexual experience by class standing is as follows: 10.2% freshman, 13.6% sophomore, 37.3% junior, 35.6% senior, and 3.3% graduate student. Therefore, juniors and seniors accounted for nearly three quarters of the participants who reported an unwanted sexual experience. However, this is not surprising when one considers that participants were asked to report how many instances of unwanted sexual contact have occurred since becoming a student at UNA. Unless they are transfer students, most juniors and seniors will have had a longer history at UNA than freshmen and sophomores. The majority of victims identified as Caucasian (74.6%) and heterosexual (86.4%).

Group affiliation was also analyzed to determine if any of the following groups were overrepresented in reporting victimization: athletes; social fraternity and sorority members; band members; ROTC cadets; international students; and early college students. Social fraternity and sorority members were the only group that was overrepresented in reporting victimization. While social fraternity and sorority members accounted for 13% of the overall sample, they accounted for 28.3% of reported victims. A chi-square test for independence confirmed that the association between greek affiliation and victimization was statistically significant ($p < .05$). More detailed demographic information regarding victims is available for review in **Tables 3 – 7 in Appendix B**.

Demographic Information about Perpetrators

Eighty-six percent (86.4%) of victims identified their perpetrators as male, 7.6% as female, and 6% were unsure of the gender of their perpetrator. When victims were asked who the unwanted sexual experience involved, 31.3% identified the perpetrator as an acquaintance, 20.8% as a stranger, 16.7% as a romantic partner, 16.7% as a casual or first date, 12.5% as a non-romantic friend, and 2.0% as an employer/supervisor. When asked if the perpetrator was a student at their university, 58.2% of victims said yes, 29.9% said no, and 11.9% said they were unsure. When asked if the perpetrator was affiliated with the university as an employee, faculty, or staff member, 6% of victims said yes, 83.6% said no, and 10.4% said they were unsure. More detailed demographic information regarding perpetrators is available for review in **Tables 8 – 11 in Appendix B**.

Context of Unwanted Sexual Experiences

When asked where the incident occurred, 65.6% of victims reported that the incident took place off campus while 34.4% reported that the incident took place on-campus. Victims were asked a series of questions that assessed if the incident involved their or the perpetrators' use of alcohol and/or drugs, including if they were given drugs without their consent. Of the incidents reported, 38.2% involved the victim's use of alcohol and 35.3% involved the perpetrator's use of alcohol. When asked if the incident involved drugs, 7.4% of victims said the incident involved the perpetrator's use of recreational drugs, 2.9% of victims said the incident involved their voluntary use of recreational drugs, 2.9% of victims said the incident involved them being given drugs without their consent, and 8.8% of victims were unsure if they were given drugs without their consent. More detailed information regarding alcohol and/or drugs used or given during incidents is available for review in **Tables 12 - 13 in Appendix B**.

Disclosure of Unwanted Sexual Experiences

Of the 68 individuals in our sample who reported an unwanted sexual experience, 53% said they had told at least one person about the incident, while 47% said they did not tell anyone about the incident. Victims who said they had told at least one person about their unwanted sexual experiences were asked to identify who they told about the incident and were allowed to indicate multiple individuals if they had told more than one person. Victims were nearly three times more likely to disclose to a close friend than to any other group listed, including roommates, romantic partners, parents, counselors, faculty, staff, police, or victim support services. If victims indicated they did not tell at least one person about the incident, they were asked to indicate why and were allowed to indicate multiple reasons. The five most common reasons listed by victims who did not disclose were: (1) it was a private matter, (2) wanted to forget it happened, (3) didn't want others to worry about them, (4) had other things to focus on (school, work), and (5) didn't think it was that serious. More detailed demographic information regarding disclosure is available for review in **Tables 14 - 16** in **Appendix B**.

Reporting of Unwanted Sexual Experiences

When asked if they were aware of UNA's formal procedures to report the incident, 41.8% of victims reported yes and 58.2% said no. Out of 68 individuals reporting an unwanted sexual experience, only 5% of victims ($N=3$) chose to use UNA's formal procedures to report the incident. These three individuals were asked to indicate how much they were helped by UNA's formal procedures on a scale of 1 – 5 (1=didn't help me at all; 5=completely solved the problem). The average rating of UNA's formal procedures by those who utilized them was a 4.0 ($SD=1.73$), which indicates that victims who used the formal procedures found them beneficial. More detailed information regarding reporting is available for review in **Tables 17 - 18** in **Appendix B**.

Friends' Disclosures of Unwanted Sexual Experiences

All survey respondents were asked if they had friends or acquaintances tell them that they were the victim of an unwanted sexual experience since the start of the current academic year. A total of **73 individuals** in our sample responded yes to this question. Participants who responded yes to this question were asked to report the number of women and men who had disclosed to them. Respondents indicated that a total of 77 women and 10 men had disclosed an unwanted sexual experience to them since the start of the current academic year. More detailed information regarding friends' disclosures of unwanted sexual experiences is available for review in **Tables 19 - 21** in **Appendix B**.

Recommendations

It is recommended that UNA develop and implement systematic programming to prevent sexual assault and make our students more aware of the resources available to them if a sexual assault occurs. Often sexual assault prevention on college campuses focuses on self-defense training, which assumes that victim's attackers are strangers (Gidycz, Rich, Orchowski, King, & Miller, 2006). In our sample, 80% of victims reported their perpetrator was someone known to them. Therefore, it is recommended that sexual assault prevention education on our campus raise awareness about acquaintance rape as well as provide information to students about how to establish consent with a potential sexual partner.

Only 5% of individuals who indicated they had an unwanted sexual experience chose to use UNA's formal procedures to report the incident; nevertheless, victims who used the formal

procedures reported they found them beneficial. It is recommended that UNA promote knowledge of its resources and make students aware of the positive experiences of those who have utilized those resources. Since students are disclosing incidents of sexual assault primarily to their close friends, it will also be important to include information to students about how to provide support if a friend discloses a sexual assault to them by encouraging them to seek out resources.

Based on the survey findings and guidelines from the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault (2014), it is recommended that all sexual assault prevention programming at UNA:

- provide students education about communication tools related to explicitly establishing consent between partners
- engage men by acknowledging male victims and focusing on men as allies
- promote responsible use of alcohol in a way that does not blame victims
- promote knowledge of resources on campus and make students aware of the positive experiences of those who have utilized those resources

In order to ensure that the programming is as effective as possible, it is recommended that all freshmen be required to participate in sexual assault prevention education. Beginning in fall 2015, all freshmen at UNA will be required to take a First Year Experience (FYE) course, which would be an ideal delivery system for this programming. However, it will also be critical to target our current students who will not have gone through a FYE course. Therefore, it is recommended that the university require all students to participate in online training that is focused on sexual assault prevention. It is also recommended that the university deliver a series of sexual assault education events throughout the year. Since social fraternity and sorority members were overrepresented in reporting victimization, it is recommended that this population be targeted for programming.

II. Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence was assessed using the Safe Dates Physical Violence Victimization Scale. This scale lists sixteen acts of physical violence (e.g., slapped, pushed, kicked) and asks participants to indicate the number of times during the past year that an intimate partner committed that act of physical violence toward them. Participants were given a scale of 0 – 10+, where 0 indicated they had not experienced that act of physical violence during the past year and a 10+ indicated they had experienced that act of physical violence 10 or more times during the past year.

Incidence of Intimate Partner Violence

Incidence refers to a count of how many unique incidents of intimate partner violence occur during a given period of time (i.e., during the past year). **Table 1** in **Appendix C** details the incidence of each of the sixteen acts of physical violence reported by our sample. The incidents of physical violence most commonly reported were being pushed, shoved, or grabbed; scratched; bitten; slammed or held up against a wall; and slapped.

Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence

Prevalence rates are a count of how many unique people have experienced intimate partner violence during a given period of time (i.e., during the last year). According to the National

Institute of Justice (2008), prevalence rates are calculated by dividing the total number of individuals who report a crime by the sample population and multiplying that number by 100. A total of **157 individuals** in our sample of 978 reported experiencing at least one act of physical violence during the last year. Therefore, the prevalence rate of physical violence in our sample was **16.1%**. More detailed information regarding the prevalence of intimate partner violence in our sample is available for review in **Table 2** in **Appendix C**.

Demographic Information about Individuals Reporting Intimate Partner Violence

Of the 157 participants who reported experiencing at least one act of physical violence during the last year, 63.4% identified as female and 36.6% identified as male. The breakdown of participants who experienced at least one act of physical violence by class standing is as follows: 19.3% freshman, 13.6% sophomore, 32.9% junior, 27.9% senior, 5.7% graduate student, and 0.6% special student. The majority of victims identified as Caucasian (66.2%), with 19.3% identifying as African-American. Almost 90% of victims identified as heterosexual. More detailed demographic information regarding victims is available in **Tables 3 – 7** for review in **Appendix C**.

Reporting of Intimate Partner Violence

When asked if they sought services or contacted a hotline after they experienced an act of physical violence during the last year, 4% of victims reported yes and 96% said no. When asked if they were injured by an act of physical violence during the last year, 7% said yes and 93% said no. Of those who said they were injured, only 20% sought medical attention. More detailed information regarding reporting is available for review in **Tables 8 - 10** in **Appendix C**.

Recommendations

Based on the survey findings, it is recommended that UNA develop and implement systematic programming to prevent intimate partner violence. In order to ensure that the programming is as effective as possible, it is recommended that all freshmen be required to participate in intimate partner violence education. Again, the First Year Experience (FYE) course would be an ideal delivery system for this programming. However, it will also be critical to target current students who will not have gone through a FYE course. Therefore, it is recommended that the university require all students to participate in online training that is focused on intimate partner violence prevention. It is also recommended that the university deliver a series of intimate partner violence education events throughout the year.

Only 4% of victims reported that they sought services or contacted a hotline after they experienced an act of physical violence. Therefore, it is recommended that UNA promote knowledge of its resources on campus in relation to intimate partner violence and consider the implementation of an advocate program on campus.

III. Stalking/Bullying

Stalking/bullying was assessed using the National Violence Against Women (NVAW) Scale. The U.S. Department of Justice (2008) validated this scale using a large nationally representative sample of 8,000 men and 8,000 women. This scale lists fourteen acts of stalking/bullying (e.g., unwanted text messages, following or spying, soliciting information from friends) and asks participants to indicate the number of times during the past year that they have experienced that act. Participants were given a scale of 0 – 5,000+, where 0 indicated they had not experienced

that act of stalking/bullying during the past year and 5,000+ indicated they had experienced that act of stalking/bullying 5,000 or more times during the past year.

Incidence of Stalking/Bullying

Incidence refers to a count of how many unique incidents of stalking/bullying occur during a given period of time (i.e., during the past year). **Table 1** in **Appendix D** details the incidence of each of the fourteen acts of stalking/bullying reported by our sample. The incidents of stalking/bullying most commonly reported by our sample were receiving unwanted private messages through social media; unwanted posts on social media; unwanted text messages; unwanted emails; and unwanted phone calls.

Prevalence of Stalking/Bullying

Prevalence rates are a count of how many unique people have experienced stalking/bullying during a given period of time (i.e., during the last year). According to the National Institute of Justice (2008), prevalence rates are calculated by dividing the total number of individuals who report a crime by the sample population and multiplying that number by 100. A total of **352 individuals** in a sample of 978 reported experiencing at least one act of stalking/bullying during the last year. Therefore, the prevalence rate of stalking/bullying in our sample was **36%**. More detailed information regarding the prevalence of stalking/bullying in our sample is available for review in **Table 2** in **Appendix D**.

Demographic Information about Individuals Reporting Stalking/Bullying

Of the 352 participants who reported experiencing at least one act of stalking/bullying during the last year, 82.5% identified as female, 17.2% identified as male, and 0.3% identified as other. The breakdown of participants who experienced at least one act of stalking/bullying by class standing is as follows: 16.1% freshman, 18% sophomore, 27.8% junior, 30.4% senior, 7.1% graduate student, and 0.6% special student. The majority of victims identified as Caucasian (72.8%) and 15.8% identified as African-American. Over 90% percent of victims identified as heterosexual. More detailed demographic information regarding victims is available in **Tables 3 – 7** for review in **Appendix D**.

Recommendations

Over one third of our sample (36%) reported experiencing at least one act of stalking/bullying during the last year. Based on the survey findings, it is recommended that UNA develop and implement systematic programming to prevent stalking/bullying and pay special attention to educating our students about how to use social media responsibly and provide them with information about resources if they need help. In order to ensure that the programming is as effective as possible, it is recommended that all freshmen be required to participate in stalking/bullying prevention education. Again, the First Year Experience (FYE) course would be an ideal delivery system for this programming. However, it will also be critical to target current students who will not have gone through a FYE course. Therefore, it is recommended that the university require all students to participate in online training that is focused on stalking/bullying prevention. It is also recommended that the university deliver a series of education events throughout the year that include information about stalking/bullying. It is recommended that UNA promote knowledge of its resources on campus in relation to stalking/bullying and consider the implementation of an advocate program on campus.

IV. Perceptions of General Campus Climate

Perceptions of the general campus climate were assessed using two scales: (1) School Connectedness Scale (McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002), and (2) Trust in the College Support System Scale (Sulkowski, 2011). Both scales are available for review in **Tables 1 – 2** in **Appendix E**.

The overwhelming majority of survey respondents (79%) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with statements indicating they felt valued and connected to the university, faculty, and administration, while 21% “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” with those statements.

In contrast, only 38.7% of survey respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with statements indicating the university system does enough to protect students’ safety and provides a good support system for students who experience difficulties, while 61.3% “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” with those statements. A detailed breakdown of participants’ responses is available for review in **Table 3** in **Appendix E**.

Recommendations

The findings suggest that students in our sample felt valued and connected to the university, but they believed the university could do more to protect students from harm and provide a better support system to students who experience difficulties. One possible explanation for this perception is a lack of knowledge about UNA’s existing resources. It is recommended that UNA promote knowledge of its resources and make students aware of the positive experiences of those who have utilized those resources. It is also recommended that the university consider establishing a student advisory board that will work with university staff (e.g., UNA Police Chief, Title IX Coordinator, Student Conduct Director) in order to engage students and increase transparency.

V. Perceptions of Campus Leadership, Policies, and Reporting Practices

Perceptions of campus leadership, policies, and reporting practices relating to sexual assault were assessed using adapted versions of two scales: (1) Department of Defense Equal Opportunity Climate Survey, and (2) Carleton College Campus Climate Survey. Both scales are available for review in **Tables 1 – 2** in **Appendix F**.

The adapted version of the Department of Defense Equal Opportunity Climate Survey assesses students’ perceptions of how campus authority at the university would respond to someone reporting sexual assault. Nearly 70% of survey respondents indicated that they believed our campus authority would be “very likely” or “moderately likely” to take the report seriously, protect the safety of the person making the report, and take appropriate corrective action, while 30.2% reported they felt that was “slightly likely” or “not likely at all.”

The adapted version of the Carleton College Campus Climate Survey assesses students’ knowledge of resources on campus that address sexual assault and its formal reporting procedures. Only half of survey respondents (50.2%) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with statements indicating that if they or a friend were assaulted they would know where to get help and that they understand UNA’s formal reporting procedures. The remaining 48.8% of survey respondents reported that they “neither agreed nor disagreed,” “disagreed,” or “strongly

disagreed” with those statements. A detailed breakdown of participants’ responses on both scales is available for review in **Tables 3-4** in **Appendix F**.

Recommendations

These findings suggest that the overwhelming majority of our sample felt that if they were to report a sexual assault to a campus authority that the university would take the report seriously; however, only half of the students in our sample indicated that they have a clear understanding of UNA’s formal procedures for reporting sexual assault. Again, it is recommended that UNA promote knowledge of its resources by incorporating this information into First Year Experience courses, its online training program, and campus-wide education events.

VI. Rape Myth Acceptance

It is critical to examine rape myth acceptance in any college community, because rape myths blame victims and minimize their experiences, justify the actions of perpetrators, and discourage victims from reporting and seeking help (King & Roberts, 2011). In the current survey, rape myth acceptance was assessed using the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, which contains five subscales: (1) she asked for it; (2) it wasn’t really rape; (3) she lied; (4) he didn’t mean to; and (5) he didn’t mean to – alcohol. Participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with each item on a scale of 1 – 5 (1=strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). The Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale is available for review in **Table 1 Appendix G**.

In terms of the overall scale, 68.9% of survey respondents “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” with statements indicating acceptance of rape myths, 25% “neither agreed nor disagreed”, and the remaining 6.1% “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with statements indicating acceptance of rape myths. While the majority of our sample disagreed or strongly disagreed with statements indicating acceptance of rape myths, it is concerning that one quarter of our sample indicated neutrality. Even more concerning are the participants who indicated agreement or strong agreement with statements indicating rape myth acceptance.

The degree of neutrality and agreement with rape myth acceptance in our sample was even more concerning when examining three of the subscales. The “she asked for it” subscale assesses the degree to which respondents believe that victims are often somewhat responsible if a sexual assault occurs. In our sample, 27.4% of respondents were neutral and 13.1% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with statements in this subscale. The “she lied” subscale assesses the degree to which respondents believe that individuals who report sexual assault are often lying. In our sample, 29.2% of respondents were neutral and 13.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with statements in this subscale. Finally, the “he didn’t mean to” subscale assesses the degree to which respondents believe that sexual assault is often the result of perpetrators getting carried away and being unable to control their sex drive. In our sample, 26.5% of respondents were neutral and 21.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with statements in this subscale. A detailed breakdown of participants’ responses on the overall scale and subscale is available for review in **Table 2** in **Appendix G**.

Rape Myth Acceptance by Gender

Independent samples *t*-tests revealed significant differences ($p<.05$) in rape myth acceptance based on gender. Women were significantly less likely to agree with rape myths than men, and this finding was true for the overall scale and for all subscales. The means and standard

deviations for the overall scale and all subscales are presented in **Table 2** in **Appendix G**. See **Table 3** in **Appendix G** for the means and standard deviations for males versus females and results of *t*-tests comparing rape myth acceptance by gender.

Rape Myth Acceptance by Class Standing

A one-way analysis of variance revealed significant differences ($p < .05$) in rape myth acceptance based on class standing. Freshmen were significantly more likely to agree with rape myths than graduate students, but freshmen did not differ significantly from any other undergraduates. In the subscales, freshmen were significantly more likely to agree with statements in the “he didn’t mean to” subscale than seniors, and freshmen were significantly more likely to agree with statements in the “he didn’t mean to – alcohol” subscale than sophomores and seniors. The means and standard deviations for the overall scale and all subscales by class standing are presented in **Table 5** in **Appendix G**. See **Table 6** in **Appendix G** for results from a one way analysis of variance with post-hoc comparisons for rape myth acceptance by class standing.

Recommendations

As aforementioned, rape myths blame victims and minimize their experiences, justify the actions of perpetrators, and discourage victims from reporting and seeking help (King & Roberts, 2011). Therefore, it is critical that rape myths are specifically addressed in all sexual assault prevention programming by incorporating this information into First Year Experience courses, online training, and campus-wide education events.

VII. Bystander Attitudes and Behaviors

Bystander attitudes and behaviors refer to individuals’ perceptions and actions when they are present in risky situations that could lead to sexual assault as well as their beliefs about their responsibility to raise awareness and prevent sexual assault in their community (Banyard, 2008). In the current survey, bystander attitudes and behaviors were assessed using two scales: (1) the Bystander Readiness to Help Scale (Banyard, 2008), and (2) the Bystander Attitudes Scale (McMahon, 2010). Both scales are available for review in **Tables 1 – 2** in **Appendix H**.

The Bystander Readiness to Help Scale contains three subscales that assess: (1) the degree to which respondents are aware of the problem of sexual assault on their campus (No Awareness Subscale); (2) the degree to which respondents feel it is their responsibility to learn more about sexual assault and do something about it (Responsibility Subscale); and (3) the degree to which respondents have participated in events to learn about or prevent sexual assault (Action Subscale).

Below is a breakdown of participants’ responses on the Bystander Readiness to Help subscales. For more detailed information, see **Table 3** in **Appendix H**.

- *No Awareness Subscale*. In our sample, approximately a quarter of respondents (26.2%) indicated that they were aware of the problem of sexual assault on our campus. However, nearly half (45.4%) of our sample neither agreed nor disagreed with those statements and another 28.4% indicated that they believed sexual assault was not a problem on our campus.
- *Responsibility Subscale*. In our sample, only 7.4% of respondents indicated that they believed it was their responsibility to learn more about sexual assault and do something about it. Over one third of respondents (34.2%) neither agreed nor disagreed with these

statements, and 58.4% indicated that they did not believe it was their responsibility to learn more about sexual assault or do something about it.

- *Action Subscale*. Only 17.3% of our sample reported that they had actively participated in events to learn more about or prevent sexual assault. Approximately one fifth of respondents (19.1%) neither agreed nor disagreed with these statements, and 63.6% reported they had not participated in events to learn more about or prevent sexual assault.

The Bystander Attitudes Scale assesses how likely participants are to engage in active bystander behaviors, specifically behaviors that would prevent sexual assault both for themselves (e.g. “Stop sexual activity when asked to, even if I am already sexually aroused”) and others (e.g., “Check in with my friend who looks drunk when they go to a room with someone else at a party”). The scale also assesses how likely participants are to confront a friend if their behavior was sexually inappropriate (e.g., “Confront a friend who is hooking up with someone who was passed out”) or report a friend who committed sexual assault. The majority of respondents (67.4%) indicated that they would be moderately to extremely likely to engage in active bystander behaviors, while 26.7% indicated they were not sure if they would engage in active bystander behaviors, and 5.6% indicated they would be unlikely to engage in active bystander behaviors. For more detailed information, see **Table 4** in **Appendix H**.

Bystander Attitudes and Behaviors by Gender

Independent samples *t*-tests revealed significant differences ($p < .05$) in bystander attitudes and behavior based on gender. Women reported being more aware of sexual assault as a problem on campus than men, and women were also more likely than men to have participated in an event to learn more about and prevent sexual assault. Women also reported that they were more likely to engage in active bystander behaviors than men. The means and standard deviations for the bystander scales and subscales are presented in **Table 5** in **Appendix H**. See **Table 6** in **Appendix H** for the means and standard deviations for males versus females and results of *t*-tests comparing bystander attitudes and behavior by gender.

Bystander Attitudes and Behaviors by Class Standing

A one-way analysis of variance revealed significant differences ($p < .05$) in bystander attitudes and behaviors based on class standing. Freshmen reported being less aware of sexual assault as a problem on campus than both juniors and seniors. Freshmen also reported that they were less likely to have participated in an event to learn more about and prevent sexual assault than sophomore and seniors. The means and standard deviations for the bystander attitudes and behaviors scales by class standing are presented in **Table 7** in **Appendix H**. See **Table 8** in **Appendix H** for results from a one way analysis of variance with post-hoc comparisons for bystander attitudes and behaviors by class standing.

Recommendations

The results from our sample provide us with some areas of concern. Only one quarter of our sample indicated that they were aware of the problem of sexual assault on campus, and only 7% believed it was their responsibility to learn more about sexual assault and do something about it. Therefore it is not surprising that the majority of our sample had not participated in events to learn more about or prevent sexual assault. However, the results offered some reasons to be optimistic. It is encouraging that the majority of our sample indicated that they would be likely to engage in active bystander behaviors, particularly when one considers our campus has not yet conducted student bystander trainings. Based on the survey findings, it is recommended that

UNA develop and implement student bystander trainings. It is recommended that bystander training be incorporated into First Year Experience courses, online training, and campus-wide education events.

Summary of Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended that UNA develop and implement systematic programming that addresses the following:

- Sexual assault prevention that provides students with education about communication tools related to explicitly establishing consent between partners; engages men by acknowledging male victims and focuses on men as allies; promotes responsible use of alcohol in a way that does not blame victims; addresses rape myths; incorporates bystander training; and promotes knowledge of resources on campus and makes students aware of the positive experiences of those who have utilized those resources.
- Intimate partner violence prevention that focuses on early warning signs and promotes knowledge of campus resources.
- Stalking/bullying prevention that pays special attention to educating our students about how to use social media responsibly and promotes knowledge of campus resources.

In order to ensure that the programming is as effective as possible, it is recommended that prevention education on each of these topics areas be offered through three modes of delivery: (1) First Year Experience (FYE) courses, (2) a required online training program for all students, and (3) a series of campus-wide education events throughout each academic year. Since social fraternity and sorority members were overrepresented in reporting victimization, it is recommended that this population be targeted for programming.

Over 60% of survey respondents indicated that they do not believe the university does enough to protect students' safety or provide a good support system for students who experience difficulties. One possible explanation for these findings is a lack of knowledge about UNA's existing resources. In fact, only half of the participants in our sample indicated that they have a clear understanding of UNA's formal procedures for reporting sexual assault. To address these concerns it is recommended that UNA promote knowledge of its resources and make students aware of the positive experiences of those who have utilized those resources. It is also recommended that the university

- implement an advocate program on campus to work with victims of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking/bullying.
- establish a student advisory board that will work with university staff (e.g., UNA Police Chief, Title IX Coordinator, Student Conduct Director) in order to engage students and increase transparency.

For More Information

For more information, please contact UNA's Title IX Coordinator, Ms. Tammy Jacques, at tmwells@una.edu or (256) 765-4223.

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